

Hachiko

Pamela S. Turner (1957-2016) is a US based novelist and artist. She has travelled the world and used her experiences to write novels for children. When she was in Tokyo, she heard the urban legend of Hachiko. Later, she wrote the story after returning to the US. Her first book is *Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog*. Today she is known for her other books including *The Frog Scientist*, *Samurai Rising* and *How to Build a Human*. *Hachiko* is a true story about the loyalty of a dog. The Japanese value loyalty as one of the best qualities of people. In this story, a dog's loyalty teaches lessons to the readers.

Hachiko was an Akita dog, born and raised in the village of the same name in Japan. He belonged to Hidesaburo Ueno, a professor at the Tokyo Imperial University. The story begins with the six-year old narrator being taken to Shibuya station to wait for his father. This narrator, named Kentaro, went with his mother to the station and saw the dog outside. The dog was sitting quietly, all alone by a newspaper stand. He had thick cream-coloured fur and a bushy tail. His brown eyes were fixed on the station entrance. Kentaro's father appeared with another older man. The dog leaped up in joy when he saw the older man. The older man was Dr. Ueno who worked with Kentaro's father in the University. The dog was Dr. Ueno's pet.

Dr. Ueno introduced the dog as Hachiko. The name meant "little Hachi" as the dog was still a puppy though he looked big. Hachiko walked Dr. Ueno to the station everyday and waited till he returned in the evening. Kentaro and Hachiko liked each other. The next day onwards, Kentaro went to the station everyday just to see the dog. He took a bit of food from his lunch for Hachiko. The dog and the boy became very good friends. When it was cold, Kentaro would cuddle with the dog. Hachiko always came for his master.

One day, in the month of May, Kentaro's father brought the news that Dr. Ueno had died. Kentaro was worried about Hachiko. But the dog had been taken by Dr. Ueno's relatives to live with them in Akita. Kentaro wanted to take Hachiko in but his father rejected the idea. A few days later, Kentaro saw Hachiko at Shibuya Station again. The dog had come for his master. Kentaro's parents brought him food and water everyday. Other passengers became fond of the dog as well. This went on for a while till Kentaro met Mr. Kobayashi, Dr. Ueno's gardener.

Kobayashi said that Hachiko waited at the station till night and went back home. He slept on the porch and came to the station in the morning. The gardener believed that Hachiko came to honour his master's memory. One day, Kentaro heard that Hachiko had died at Shibuya Station, still waiting for his master. Later that day, Hachiko's waiting spot

was covered with flowers by the passengers. As the years went by, people collected money to build a statue for Hachiko at his waiting spot. Today the big bronze statue is a place for friends and family to meet. The statue and the memory of Hachiko serve as reminders of faithfulness. Hachiko was part of Dr. Ueno's family and he proved it.

Brother's Day

A.K. Ramanujan (1959-1993) is a poet, linguist and folklorist. He is the first Indian writer to analyse the folktales of various states. He won the Sahitya Akademi award in 1999 for *The Collected Poems*. In his cultural essay "Is There An Indian Way of Thinking?" He researches complex Indian psychology. *Folktales from India* and *Oral Tales from Twenty Indian Languages* (1991) are his collections of folklore from Indian culture. "Brother's Day" is from the collection *Folktales from India*. It emphasizes the love and affection between a brother and a sister.

"Brother's Day" is a Rajasthani folktale on the celebration of 'Bhai Dooj' on the second day of Diwali. Women were fetched home by their brothers from their husbands' home on this day. Brothers gave gifts to their sisters and visited them. This tale is based on the curses Rajasthani women gave their brothers to supposedly protect them from evil on this day. Cow-dung figures of brothers, sisters and snakes are left outside the homes. Offerings are cooked and given to stray dogs, goats and birds. Women stand outside their homes and curse their brothers. Then they pray and bless them saying "May he live long!" This is their way of affecting karma and protecting their brothers.

The tale begins with a brother asking his mother permission to visit his sister on Bhai Dooj. The mother tries to persuade her son to stay home as the journey was dangerous. She gives up and makes a long skirt and a wrap for her daughter. She also makes a shirt and a turban for her son-in-law. The boy takes the bundle and walks through the forest. First, he meets a large tree that tries to fall on him. He asks the tree to spare his life as he is taking gifts to his sister. He gives permission to the tree to fall on him when he returns. Then he meets a wide and rushing river that tries to wash him away. The river agrees to wash him away on his return journey. Likewise, a snake and a lion agree to bite him on his way back.

The brother reaches his sister's village. He spots his sister spinning. But she did not greet him as her thread had broken. It was bad luck to greet a person with a broken thread. She joins the thread and greets him. She gratefully accepts the gifts and asks her neighbours for advice on the feast. One of them is very jealous and asks her to oil the floor and burn butter. Another advises her to prepare a feast with butter and sugar rice. The brother prepares to leave after four days. The sister makes special round cakes for her brother and

her parents. She gets up in the middle of the night to grind flour. She fails to notice that a black snake had fallen into the flour. She grinds it and makes the cakes. She packs them and the brother leaves. Later she notices the bones of the snake and hurries into the forest to save her brother. Luckily her brother had not eaten them. However he says he cannot postpone death as he had already promised the tree, the river, the snake and the lion.

The sister runs back home and collects gifts to appease the tree, the river, the snake and the lion. She offers the tree five toy pebbles. She gives the river a beautiful necklace and a cup of milk for the snake. Finally she gives the lion a young goat. She accompanies the brother to protect him all the way home. Halfway through the forest, the sister gets thirsty and the brother leaves her to find water. She spots Mother Fate wandering around. Mother Fate reveals that the brother will die soon unless the sister can protect him with her curses on Brother's Day. Immediately the sister starts cursing him.

The brother's wedding has already been fixed. When the siblings reach home, the engagement ceremony is announced. On the big day, the sister sits on the groom's special stool along with her brother. She rubs turmeric on her face, eats his special meal and even rides along with him to the bride's house. She bangs on the wooden marriage symbol on the bride's doorway with her brother's sword. She does everything like her brother. Everyone thinks that she is crazy. Even the brother is shocked when she sleeps in the bridal chamber. But he does not say anything to hurt her. The sister remains awake all night when she spots a snake slithering near her brother's bed. She cuts the snake into three pieces and hides the pieces under a shield. Then she sleeps peacefully.

The next morning the mother is shocked to find the sister sleeping peacefully. She has saved her brother. She had watched out for him all along. The sister has fought with nature and even Fate to save her brother from death. She gave away all her precious belongings to protect her brother. The brother also goes through great perils to see his sister. Hence the love between a brother and sister stands through Fate and time.